

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for remotely diagnosing a computer, comprising:

establishing a first communication channel between a server and a communications interface associated with a client computer, wherein said communications interface includes a browser;

establishing a second communication channel between a client application operating on said client computer and said server, ~~wherein said first communication channel is logically separate from said second communication channel;~~

downloading an identifier from said server to said browser over said first communication channel;

placing said identifier in a title bar of a browser window;

passing said identifier from said browser window to said client application, wherein said client application copies said identifier from said browser window; and

in response to a signal associated with said communications interface and received by said server, downloading a first diagnostic tool from said server to said client application;

executing said first diagnostic tool using said client application;

returning a result from said client application to said server; and

returning a disposition from said server to said communications interface.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

establishing a user record in a database associated with said server corresponding to said client computer, wherein said record includes a status field;

in response to a signal received from said communications interface, setting said status field to a first value;

executing a second diagnostic tool using said client application in response to said client application detecting said first value in said user record.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 3, further comprising:
in response to a signal received from said client application, setting said status field to a second value after said step of executing a said second diagnostic tool is essentially complete;
displaying a next page in response to said communications interface detecting said second value in said user record.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 3, wherein said client application polls said server to detect said first value.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein said communications interface polls said server to detect said second value.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
using said communications interface, prompting a user to select a potential computer problem;
in response to said user's input, downloading and executing a third diagnostic tool using said client application;
returning a result of executing said third diagnostic tool to said server; and
displaying a disposition to said user using said communications interface.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 7, wherein said server compares said result of executing said third diagnostic tool to a plurality of stored results, wherein each of said stored results is associated with one of a plurality of dispositions, and wherein said server returns at least a first disposition of said plurality of dispositions to said communications interface.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 7, wherein said third diagnostic tool traps an error message generated on said client computer, and wherein said step of returning a result to said server comprises returning said trapped error message to said server.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
in response to a signal from said communications interface and received by said server, downloading a second client diagnostic tool from said server to said client application;
executing said second client diagnostic tool; and
returning a result from said client application to said server.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein said disposition comprises information concerning at least one of a list of installed hardware, a list of installed software, a hardware fault, a software fault, a recommendation to perform a maintenance procedure and a source for obtaining further information.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
providing at least a partial inventory of devices installed on said client computer to a user; and
prompting the user of said client computer to identify one or more additional installed devices.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
storing at least a partial inventory of devices installed on said client computer in a database associated with said server.

14. (Currently Amended) A system for remotely diagnosing computer hardware and software, comprising:

a server;
a server application program;
a client computer;
a plurality of client diagnostic tools;
a computer network interconnecting said server and said client computer;
a communications interface comprising a browser in communication with said server over a first logical line of communication;
a client application program, wherein said client application program communicates with said server over a second logical line of communication, wherein said client application program is in communication with said communications interface over a third logical line of communication, wherein only an identifier passed from said communications interface to said client application program is communicated by said third logical line of communication, wherein said third logical line of communication is not established over said computer network, and wherein said client application performs a number of functions, including:
 executing at least a one of said plurality of client diagnostic tools, said at least one of said client diagnostic tools being downloaded from said server over one of said second logical line of communication and a third logical line of communication; and
 returning results obtained from said executing step to said server, wherein in response to said results returned to said server, said server application program returns a disposition concerning said client computer to said communications interface.

15. (Original) The system of Claim 14, wherein said computer network comprises the Internet.

16. (Original) The system of Claim 14, wherein a first of said client diagnostic tools creates a first inventory of hardware and software installed on said client computer.

17. (Original) The system of Claim 16, wherein said first inventory is returned to said communications interface.

18. (Original) The system of Claim 14, wherein said disposition concerning said client computer comprises at least one of a suggested maintenance operation, a suggested repair, a detected fault and a referral to an additional source of repair information.

19. (Original) The system of Claim 18, wherein said referral to an additional source of repair information comprises providing at least one of a telephone number, a mailing address, an e-mail address and a Universal Resource Locator.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a user of a computer with a diagnosis of said computer from a remote location, comprising:

establishing a ~~first~~ communications channel ~~comprising a first logical line of communication~~ between a communications interface associated with said computer and a server located at said remote location, wherein said communications interface comprises a browser program;

passing an identifier to said communications interface as a browser window title;

in response to said server receiving a first signal from said communications interface, downloading a client application to said computer ~~over a second communication channel comprising a second logical line of communication;~~

installing said client application on said computer;

after said installing, passing said identifier from said browser window title to said client application;

in response to said server receiving a second signal from said communications interface, downloading a first diagnostic tool to said computer;

executing said first diagnostic tool using said client application, wherein at least a partial inventory of at least one of hardware and software associated with said computer is obtained;

returning said at least partial inventory from said client application to said server;

downloading a second diagnostic tool to said computer;

executing said second diagnostic tool using said client application, wherein at least a first test of at least a portion of at least one of said hardware and software is performed;

returning a first result from said first test to said server;

analyzing said first result; and

returning a disposition of said computer to said user.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein said step of analyzing said first result comprises comparing said first result to a plurality of stored results having an associated disposition.

22. (Original) The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

downloading a third diagnostic tool to said computer;

executing said third diagnostic tool using said client application, wherein an application resident in said computer is opened, and wherein information concerning the opening of said resident application is returned to said server.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, wherein said information comprises at least one of a time to load said resident application, an error message, and a time to exit said resident application.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

assigning an account number to said computer;
downloading said account number from said server to said communications interface;
placing said account number in a title bar of a window on said computer; and
copying said account number from said title bar to said client application.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein said step of executing said first diagnostic tool is initiated in response to said client application detecting a first value in a user record stored on said server, wherein said first value is entered in said user record in response to a signal received from said communications interface.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 25, wherein following said step of executing said first diagnostic tool a second value is entered in said user record, and wherein in response to said communications interface detecting said second value a next page is displayed.

27-38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently Amended) A method for remotely diagnosing a computer, comprising:

establishing communication between a server and a communications interface associated with a client computer, wherein said communications interface includes a browser;

establishing communication between a client application operating on said client computer and said server;

in response to a signal associated with said browser and received by said server, downloading a first diagnostic tool from said server to said client application;

executing said first diagnostic tool;

returning a result from said client application to said server;

returning a disposition from said server to said browser;

downloading a ~~client account number~~ an identifier from said server to said browser;

placing said ~~account number~~ identifier in a title bar of a browser window; and
passing said ~~account number~~ identifier to said client application, wherein said client application copies said ~~account number~~ identifier from said browser window.

40. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a user of a computer with a diagnosis of said computer from a remote location, comprising:

establishing a communications channel between a communications interface associated with said computer and a server located at said remote location;

in response to said server receiving a first signal from said communications interface, downloading a client application to said computer;

installing said client application on said computer;

in response to said server receiving a second signal from said communications interface, downloading a first diagnostic tool to said computer;

executing said first diagnostic tool using said client application, wherein at least a partial inventory of hardware associated with said computer is obtained;

returning said at least partial inventory of said hardware from said client application to said server;

downloading a second diagnostic tool to said computer;

executing said second diagnostic tool using said client application, wherein at least a first functional test of at least a portion of said installed hardware is performed;

returning a first result from said first functional test to said server;

analyzing said first result;

returning a disposition of said computer to said user;

assigning an ~~account number~~ identifier to said computer;

downloading said ~~account number~~ identifier from said server to said communications interface;

placing said ~~account number~~ identifier in a title bar of a window on said computer; and

copying said ~~account number~~ identifier from said title bar to said client application.

41. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said passing said identifier from said browser window to said client application comprises passing said identifier using a third communication channel.

42. (New) The method of Claim 41, wherein said first and second communication channels are established over a network, and wherein said third communication channel does not comprise said network.